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Reserve

On December 12, 1940 the American Farm Bureau Federation, as represented by delegates elected from 40 states, held a membership meeting at Baltimore. From this meeting a resolution was developed which (1) discussed American agricultural problems, (2) suggested methods for solving them, and (3) criticized and recommended alteration of present Department of Agriculture programs aimed at their solution or amelioration.

On February 11, 1941 another resolution was drawn up by President Edward A. O'Neal of the Federation and by nine state presidents and one state executive secretary of the organization. This shorter statement repeated some conclusions of the Baltimore meeting, amplified some, and re-phrased or apparently disagreed with certain others. It is mainly a plea for parity, with suggestions on how to achieve it.

Both resolutions were submitted to the Subcommittee on Agricultural Appropriations of the House Appropriations Committee for their consideration.

On February 25, and at the request of the Subcommittee, Secretary of Agriculture Wickard likewise submitted a statement of the USDA's views, comments and criticisms answering those expressed by the Farm Bureau Federation. The statement is divided into four parts, and roughly parallels four principal recommendations made the Federation. Specifically, by USDA programs, these recommendations are:

1. To place under a five-man Board, called the National Farm Authority, the programs of the AAA, SCS, the crop insurance program, the ever-normal-granary program, the SMA, and the planning for these programs.

2. To place the Farm Credit Administration and a substantial part of the Farm Security Administration under a second similar Board.

3. To split the administration of programs on the State level like this: (a) Part of the SCS and the supervisory services of the Farm Security Administration to go to the State Extension Services, and part of the SCS to go to the director of the State experiment station; (b) The AAA, conservation, ever-normal-granary, crop insurance and surplus disposal programs -- and the cooperative planning essential to these and other programs -- to be turned over to a State committee or board; and (c) the credit functions apparently to be handled by a Farm Credit Board.

4. To place local administration, or authority for administrative coordination of the programs named in (a) and (b) immediately above, in the hands of county extension agents. (The county agents are administratively responsible neither to the proposed National Farm Authority, the proposed State committee, nor the Secretary of Agriculture, but exclusively to a State college official -- the extension director.)

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It will be noted that these recommendations are chiefly concerned with how agricultural programs should be administered. The reason announced by the Farm Bureau Federation for making such recommendation is a charge that present administration has resulted in widespread duplication of efforts, program and action. Bear this charge in mind as you read the Secretary of Agriculture's statement. The essential text of this statement follows.

### Part I

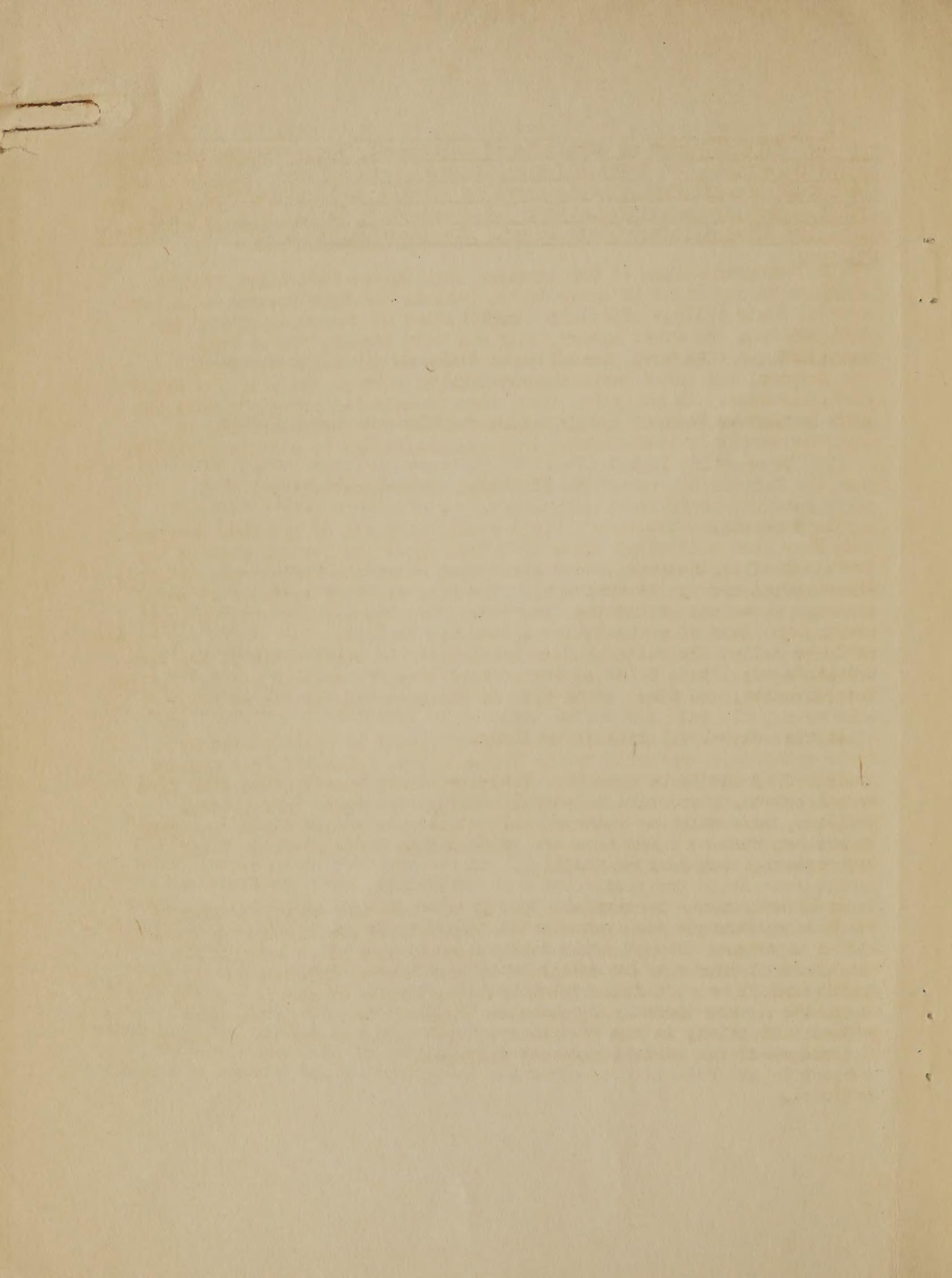
#### The Farm Bureau Proposal for Diffused Administration and Delegated Responsibility

Basic to any analysis of public administration are these facts:

(1) In enacting legislation, the Congress has occasionally provided that the Federal Government shall allot grants-in-aid to the States to carry forward, under State administration, certain activities in the public interest.

JAN 21 1946 (2) Usually, however, the Congress has placed responsibility for administration upon an executive agency which, of course, is held accountable by the President and the Congress. When the Congress chooses this course, the head of an executive agency cannot fulfill his responsibility to Congress by delegating that responsibility to a private person, to a private agency, to a State agency or employee, or to anyone else who is not responsible to him. If he were to delegate his authority and things went wrong, his sole corrective would be to resort to the negative and disruptive device of withholding funds.

(3) In deciding between the grant-in-aid method and State administration, on the one hand, and direct Federal administration, on the other, the Congress apparently has observed this distinguishing principle: Certain functions, such as education, are primarily State functions; or certain other tasks, such as road building, can be handled reasonably well with 48 separate State programs. For such activities, both the State and Federal Governments appropriate funds, often on a matching basis. Under these circumstances the grant-in-aid method seems effective and appropriate. But if a program must be truly national in scope, and the necessary funds are provided primarily or wholly from the Federal Treasury, the Congress has invariably vested full administrative responsibility in an appropriate executive agency directly accountable to Congress. And every agency head, without exception, is expected to see to it that all persons who administer the congressional mandates are directly in line of hire and fire--and subject to all Federal laws governing the selection and conduct of Federal officers.



(4) Such problems as agricultural adjustment, conservation, rehabilitation, credit, and marketing are national, some of them international in character, and must be dealt with by a truly national unified program, under single executive direction: 48 separate State programs could not meet the needs of agriculture in this rapidly changing world.

The recommendations of the American Farm Bureau Federation must be examined in the light of these facts, because the Farm Bureau would turn over to State college officials a major share of the whole job of administration. No other agency, says the Farm Bureau, "is so well qualified \* \* \* to have general supervision of all these programs." The proposal has other serious shortcomings, such as the plan for Board administration. In analyzing them, this fundamental principle must be kept in mind--a Federal agency cannot fulfill its responsibility to Congress simply by transferring that responsibility to a State official.

#### The Diffusion of Responsibility

The Farm Bureau proposes to take practically all of the farm programs that have been authorized since 1933 from under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and to place them under two independent national boards appointed by the President. The Department of Agriculture would become a research, educational and regulatory agency; and apparently it would also administer the national forestry program. One of the new boards would be called the National Farm Authority; the other would be the Farm Credit Board. Thus, to start with, there would be created two new Federal farm agencies, and there would then be three instead of one as now.

At the state level some of the programs would be administered by State committees appointed by the National Farm Authority from persons nominated by the State extension directors after consultation with farm organizations, some would be administered by the State agricultural colleges, some would be administered by the Farm Credit Board, and some by the Department of Agriculture. Thus at the State level at least four agencies would be involved.

In effect, then, the proposal is (1) to place the administration of the Federal farm programs outside the established administrative structure of the Department of Agriculture and, indeed, part of it outside the established administrative structure of the Federal Government: (2) to divide what is now a unified program into a number of parts; and (3) to distribute the parts among agencies responsible only in the most general sort of way to the President of the United States or to boards of trustees of the State land-grant colleges.



Thus, the Farm Bureau plan would split responsibility and authority of Federal administration at the national level, disperse it among Federal and non-Federal organizations at the State level, and remove it almost entirely from the Federal structure at the county level. Consequently, only at the county level and under the direction of an official not answerable to Congress, the President, the Secretary of Agriculture, or the proposed five-man Board, is there a central point of authority and responsibility for carrying on a unified program for American agriculture.

This heterogeneous method of administration would create such confusion among official agencies that some nonofficial agency would have to become the unifying force.

#### The Board Method of Administration

The proposal advocates the board method of administration. Responsibility under the plan is dispersed among a board of five people. The history of board administration is studded with failures. Ehenever



coordinate action, energy in execution, and effective results are primary considerations in determining the method of administration, final responsibility and public accountability should be lodged in one person. All authorities on public administration agree on this fundamental principle of management. The President's Committee on Administrative Management, in its report in 1937, had this to say on board administration:

\*V\* \* For purposes of management, boards and commissions have turned out to be failures. Their mechanism is inevitably slow, cumbersome, wasteful, and ineffective, and does not lend itself readily to cooperation with other agencies. Even strong men on boards find that their individual opinions are watered down in reaching board decisions. When freed from the work of management, boards are, however, extremely useful and necessary for consultation, discussion, and advice; for representation of diverse views and citizen opinion;<sup>2</sup> for quasi-judicial action and as a repository of corporate powers \* \* \*

\* \* \* The conspicuously well-managed administrative units in the Government are almost without exception headed by single administrators \* \*

#### The Delegation of Federal Responsibility to Nonfederal Officials

At the State level the Farm Bureau plan, if adopted, would make a State official the determining voice in Federal programs, and would invite farm organization politics to enter in. First, the State director of extension, a State official, would himself administer a large share of the program. Second, only he would be authorized to nominate the members of the State committee, which would handle much of the remainder of the program. Third, he is administratively in charge of county agents who would either administer or coordinate all programs at the county level. Fourth, in certain States the State extension service and the State and local farm bureaus are indistinguishable in the public mind.

State directors of extension are in no way administratively responsible to any Federal agency or any Federal official. They can neither be appointed nor dismissed by the Secretary of Agriculture, nor by the proposed National Farm Authority, nor by the proposed Farm Credit Board. They are responsible to college presidents, who in turn report to boards of trustees appointed by State Governors. The members of these college boards may or may not be in sympathy with the national farm program. They may or may not be aware of or responsive to the intent of the Congress that enacted the national farm legislation.

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<sup>2</sup>The Department of Agriculture is today one of the most advanced governmental institutions in its effective use of boards and committees for the underscored purposes, at community, county, State, and national levels. (Underlining supplied.)



The county agricultural extension agent, who is the person in whom two forks of administration would finally converge, is the local representative of the State agricultural college. He is the local counterpart of the State director of extension. He too is appointed by the board of trustees of the land-grant college. He too is supported from a fund raised by a State appropriation and a Federal grant-in-aid, buttressed by an annual appropriation voted by the county commissioners. The Farm Bureau also contributes in some States. Neither the Secretary of Agriculture, nor the proposed National Farm Authority, nor the proposed Farm Credit Board can appoint or dismiss a county agent. In some States the State director of extension must obtain the approval of the county farm bureau before he appoints a county agent.

It should be clearly understood that the present arrangement--under which (1) the State director of extension is appointed by the governing board of the college, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, and may be dismissed only by such board without the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture; and (2) county agents are appointed and dismissed by the State director of extension without Federal review or concurrence--is wholly satisfactory in agricultural educational work. County agents have rendered yeoman service to American agriculture. They are the front-line workers in a unique and, in many ways, one of the world's most valuable educational institutions. Extension and Department of Agriculture workers have been cooperating helpfully for a quarter of a century. Education is more important than ever before. This is true not only of the traditional subject-matter type of education, but especially of the basic educational work essential to an understanding of current agricultural programs and problems.

The present administrative relations between Extension and the Department of Agriculture are also satisfactory for handling the cooperative planning procedures outlined in part III. (See p. 13)

It is no reflection on the truly remarkable service Extension workers are giving American farmers in educational and planning work to point out now that we should not mix education with the administration of Federal action programs; that, further, present administrative relationships between State extension services and the Department are not legally satisfactory for Extension handling of such Federal action programs.

#### Increasing Costs by Splitting Single Programs

The division and distribution of programs and parts of programs, as advocated, would, in some instances, separate a single aspect of the national farm program into parts which clearly could not be made to function separately and still carry out the intent of the Congress as expressed in the authorizing legislation. For example: The Farm Bureau proposal is to split the rural rehabilitation program of the Farm Security Administration into two parts. The farm and home guidance



work, upon which the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program and the integrity of the Federal loans depend, would be turned over to State extension directors and the lending function would be handled by the Farm Credit Board. Under such an arrangement underprivileged farmers would experience many difficulties and confusion in trying to get the help they need. The cost of administration would increase greatly, probably double, because at present the same personnel handles the farm and home guidance work and makes and collects the loans. Furthermore, separation of the guidance and financial phases of rehabilitation would result in a sharp decrease in collections, causing a considerable financial loss to the Government. Another example: Part of the national soil conservation effort would be under the Board arrangement, part under the Extension Director. Part of the activities now under the Soil Conservation Service would be placed under the State director of extension, part under the director of the State experiment station. Still other divisions: Flood control, farm forestry, and water facilities.

### The Crux of the Matter

The issues crystallized by the proposal, then are: (a) Shall the unified national farm program be broken down into 48 State programs? (b) Shall any of these separate State programs be dominated in any State by a farm organization? (c) Shall a State official have sole authority to nominate the members of any Federal board? (d) Shall we experiment with a discredited form of board administration now of all times in a period calling for sensitive reactions to world forces? (e) Shall we sacrifice the specialized zeal of the Farm Security Administration? Of the A.A.A.? Of the S.C.S.? (f) Does the Congress wish to establish a new principle in Federal-State relations under which States, though not required to match or even furnish any of the funds, are given responsibility for the execution of federally financed programs?

### Some Background Information

#### Why has the Farm Bureau advanced this proposal?

The Farm Bureau resolutions speak of widespread duplication of effort and lack of coordination among programs and state that simpler, more efficient administration is the purpose underlying their recommendations. Now, in the first place, all the data in the hands of the Department do not bear out the charge of widespread duplication. In the second place, the Farm Bureau proposal itself would lead to a great deal of duplication. Certainly split administration is not efficient administration.

There are several facts in the picture that should be noted: (1) The Farm Bureau, in resolutions at two or three annual conventions, has deplored the cooperative land-use planning procedures worked out by the State colleges and the Department as one prong of the present effort to achieve close coordination of programs.



(2) The Department of Agriculture, while seeking maximum cooperation of all farm organizations, has insisted upon a clear distinction between governmental responsibility and nongovernmental responsibility. Thus, the Department has insisted that the county agent, a public official, shall not solicit dues from farmers for membership in local farm bureaus.

(3) The relationship of the Farm Bureau and the State extension services is rooted in many years of association. Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. This act provided for carrying the results of agricultural research and other information to rural people. Education is recognized as a State and local function, and it always has been. The program under the Smith-Lever Act was a program of education. Congress therefore offered grants-in-aid to the States to help them create new educational mechanisms for agriculture--the State extension service. The States were required to put up part of the money. Partly to raise some of the matching funds locally, and partly to organize for educational work, most of the State extension services organized county farm bureaus. Subsequently, the county farm bureaus federated into State farm bureaus, and, in 1920, the State farm bureaus federated into the American Farm Bureau Federation. Today, about 40 State farm bureaus compose the national organization, which is a private organization with no responsibilities of any kind conferred upon it by Federal statute.

Up to the time of federation, the county and State farm bureaus were organizations engaged primarily in promoting programs of education with the extension services. Soon, however, they undertook new responsibilities in the economic and political fields. Along with the older farm organizations, they became spokesmen for farmers in State capitals and in Washington; they got into business--the business of marketing farm products, buying gas, oil, farm machinery, and other goods cooperatively, selling automobile insurance, fire insurance, etc.

The programs of the several State farm bureaus did not develop uniformly or along similar lines. In a few States the farm bureau clung to a program primarily educational in character, in others educational work and business went on side by side, and in some the programs of education were dropped entirely and the State farm bureaus and State extension services went separate ways.

In 1933 emergency conditions called for immediate national action. Congress began spelling out new national policies in new programs calling for unified national action. Influenced no doubt by its recent experience with the Federal Farm Board, Congress placed complete responsibility for the new farm programs in a single executive--the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary, needing all the help he could get, asked the State agricultural extension services to help the Department set up the



administrative machinery necessary to carry on the program under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933.<sup>3</sup> The extension services took hold, gave the Department magnificent assistance, organizing community and county committees who elected their own administrative officers, according to procedures developed by the Department.

Thus the State extension services took part in the initiation of the A.A.A. program. As soon as possible the Department relieved the extension services of purely administrative tasks. It felt, and many Extension officials agreed, that Federal programs should be administered by Federal employees; that Extension should continue to handle educational work; and that research should continue to be a cooperative Federal-State job.

Some disagreement among Extension personnel soon became evident. Consequently, the Department and State extension services took action to promote closer cooperation--namely, on July 22, 1938, they signed the Mount Weather agreement. Later in the same year, the Farm Bureau criticized this cooperative planning arrangement. It did so again in 1939. Then the Farm Bureau adopted a militant attitude in Baltimore in December 1940.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>As other acts were passed, calling for new types of action--programs of soil conservation, submarginal land purchase and development, rural rehabilitation, production credit, rural electrification development, land treatment for flood control, surplus disposal programs, etc.--the Department directly set up the necessary administrative machinery, but cooperated with Extension in educational work.

<sup>4</sup>On page 38 of the Farm Bureau's research report, entitled, "Coordination of Agricultural Programs," the Bureau states: "This set-up of community and county committees to hold community and county meetings and cooperate with educational and governmental agencies in planning and carrying out agricultural programs duplicates the objectives and set-up of the Farm Bureau organization."



## Part II

## THE CHARGE OF "DUPLICATION"

As evidence of duplication the Farm Bureau has extracted from the annual reports of the various agricultural agencies statements which seem to indicate that various agencies carry on the same types of activities. Actually, analysis on this basis shows two things: (1) That there is a logical and sensible, if not yet perfect, division of labor among agencies, and (2) that such phrases as "farm planning," "conservation," "landlord-tenant relationships," "demonstration" - in fact, the whole jargon of the professional agriculturist - are susceptible of different uses by different people.

1. For example, the Farm Bureau says: "There are four agencies engaged in conserving soil and improving fertility and in encouraging terracing." It lists Extension, A.A.A., S.C.S., and F.S.A.

Actually there are more. The Forest Service and the Interior Department also are engaged in conservation. Certainly conservation is not the exclusive responsibility of one agency of Government, or even of one Department. It is one of the major responsibilities of all branches and levels of Government. The conservation work of the Department is pretty well divided along sensible lines for competent administration. The Forest Service handles conservation on national forests and adjacent range lands. S.C.S. gives special assistance to a limited number of farmers - as many as it is able to reach with specialized assistance - who want to make physical readjustments on their farms to achieve the maximum conservation. A.A.A. pays for shifts in production and for application of conservation practices, a program available to all farmers. F.S.A., in helping farmers with farm plans for purposes of rehabilitation and making loans secure, includes in such plans simple conservation practices. Is this duplication? The only way it could be avoided under any form of organization would be to tell the lending agency, for example, to stop requiring conservation practices of its borrowers. And certainly these Federal aids to conservation do not duplicate Extension's educational program. Indeed, erosion made great headway from 1914 to 1933 despite efforts in general educational work by Extension. The remedial program of action may have followed on the heels of a program of education, but it cannot be said that it duplicates it.

(The defense arm of the United States is made up of many parts - the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, National Guard, the air corps of each, and so on; they do not duplicate one another, yet the objective of all is the same - the defense of the United States. Does this represent duplication in defense?)

2. The Farm Bureau says: "Seven agencies are engaged in land use planning." There are this many, and more. Any public agency having a program, whether local, State, or Federal, that deals with farmers or land, should take part in the cooperative system of land use planning. Land use planning is the common starting point for coordination, and program formulation by this means is the cooperative way of avoiding duplication between agencies.

3. The Farm Bureau says: "Four agencies are engaged in demonstrating farming methods," and lists Extension, S.C.S., F.S.A., R.E.A.



Extension carries on general demonstration work. Although the S.C.S. initially emphasized the demonstration of erosion control practices and hired a great deal of relief labor in doing so, the program now mainly provides farmers with the technical guidance, materials, and the supervised C.C.C. labor necessary to get a conservation job done. F.S.A. does not do demonstration work. F.S.A. by direct assistance, helps needy farmers work out management plans, not for purposes of demonstration, but rather as a supervisory aid to make loans go farther and do more for the borrower. R.E.A. gives general guidance to rural electrification cooperatives. All these agencies cooperate with Extension in the educational phases of the work.

4. The Farm Bureau says: "Five agencies help farmers carry out grazing improvement programs," and lists Extension, A.A.A., S.C.S., F.S., and the Interior Department.

All of these agencies do conduct grazing programs; but certainly not all five on the same lands. Interior works on public lands in grazing districts, Indian reservations, and other Federal lands under its jurisdiction. The Forest Service controls grazing on the national forests. The soil and moisture conservation program of S.C.S. applies to private range lands. A.A.A. helps ranchers meet the costs of conservation operations by paying cash benefits for conservation. This arrangement obviously merely represents a division of labor, geographically and by function.

5. The Farm Bureau says: "Seven agencies have contacts with farmer committees," and lists Extension, A.A.A., F.S.A., B.A.E., Crop Insurance, Commodity Credit, S.M.A.

The list is not accurate, but that is immaterial. As required by law, several agencies do function through local groups. S.C.S. works with soil-conservation supervisors, R.E.A. with electric cooperatives and farmer committees who seek to form cooperatives, F.S.A. is aided by local committees, the A.A.A. has local administrative committees, and all have contact with planning committees. The Congress sanctioned work through local committees as a safeguard to keep the programs in close touch with, and responsive to, farmer opinion. Frequent consultation with committees and advisory groups, indeed, is the backbone of the democratic form of administration the Department has fostered.

6. The Farm Bureau says: "Five agencies are assisting farmers with farm-management problems." In one sense, this is true. It is essential that the program of each of the agencies should fit the specific conditions on each individual farm. Consequently, if each action agency did not pay some attention to farm management on the individual farm there would be harmful conflict. Farm planning is a means to coordination.

The demonstrable truth is that the duplication is not the real problem in program administration. The real problem is to make all programs fit varying local conditions. For example:

(a) The programs are adapted pretty well to the requirements of Newberry County, S. C. A study there reveals no conflict. Cooperation of this sort exists: The S.C.S., in helping develop complete conservation plans farm by farm, lays out terrace lines. A county association with its own equipment builds the terraces. The A.A.A. honors those terraces as a conservation practice, pays accordingly, and the farmer liquidates his debt to the county association. The F.S.A. in making a rehabilitation loan, accepts the physical plan for the farm and adds those farm and home-management practices which are essential to rehabilitation and to



safeguarding the loan. Local people like the programs, report no serious difficulties, and speak of the excellent cooperative spirit.

(b) The programs do not fit too well in Ward County, North Dakota. Nearly 75 percent of the farm land is tax delinquent. Farmers realize that they must change permanently from a system of cash-grain farming to a system of grass - livestock - supplemental feed farming. Here farm planning has not found all the helpful answers, partly because the action agencies are not authorized to deal with all the acute problems. The programs do not conflict, nor do they duplicate one another. But neither are the special local problems being completely solved. Among other things, State legislation appears to be needed to encourage some of the necessary adjustments.

It should be kept in mind that three types of programs may, at the maximum, reach only 6 or 8 percent of the individual farms in any 1 year:

(1) The economic and adjustment programs (A.A.A., crop insurance, commodity loans, parity payments) are under single management and reach 90 percent of the eligible farmers; (2) the physical land-use programs (erosion control, water facilities, farm forestry, flood control) are under single management in S.C.S. and none of these reaches annually more than about 10 percent of the farmers who reside within local soil-conservation districts; and (3) the rehabilitation and tenancy programs under F.S.A. reach about 8 to 10 percent of the farmers. The maximum opportunity for duplication is, therefore, not great. Furthermore, if these three types of programs were put in a single bureau there would have to be divisions within such a large bureau that would be identical to the existing bureaus under the Secretary.

#### THE FARM BUREAU'S PROPOSAL, IF ADOPTED, WOULD LEAD TO DUPLICATION AND CONFLICT

No one would contend that administration of all action programs now entrusted to the Department of Agriculture is perfect. Indeed, the Department is constantly seeking to improve its work in order to carry out congressional mandates more efficiently and to provide better service to the people on the land. As will be indicated in the next part of this report, both major and minor changes in administration have recently been made. A study of the organizational history of the Department for the past 20 years shows that there has never been a year in which major changes have not been made.

So reorganization is not a new thing to the Department. But reorganization should be an orderly and, if possible, a gradual process. It should not be a disrupting thing that leads to duplication, conflict, and destruction of the morale of people who seek to serve the public interest. In the judgment of the Department this is precisely what would happen if the Farm Bureau proposal were adopted. For example:

1. Would not the existence of three agricultural agencies in Washington cause, rather than correct, duplication?

2. If part of the conservation task were placed under a State committee and another part were assigned to the State Director of Extension, would there not soon develop serious conflict and confusion?



3. In view of the varying attitudes of State directors of extension, would not extension administration of parts of national programs lead to dissensions? It must be kept in mind that unanimity of opinion does not exist among State directors of extension over the proposed system of administration that would assign major responsibilities to them. Among them differences of opinion are extreme. The director of one eastern State, for example, believes that the college extension service should assume responsibility for and carry on all phases of all action programs. The director in a neighboring State, on the other hand, wants no part of any phase of the Federal program, not consenting even, to recognize their existence in his educational program. The director in the latter State holds, moreover, that land use planning falls beyond the definition of education. Differences such as these may of course be expected to develop in a program over which there is no central national direction. In a democratic country this is a part of its strength as a principle applied to education; as a principle applied to the administration of programs created by the Congress to cope with national emergency it is a fatal weakness.

4. Since many State colleges would not accept full responsibility for administration while others would, two very different types of administrative structure would have to be set up throughout the United States. Would this not cause conflict and inefficiency?

5. Would not duplication, possibly inaction, result from separating the lending function from the service and supervisory function in the rehabilitation program. F.C.A. would have to hire new people to do its share of this work. The Extension Service likewise would have to hire people, presumably assistant county and home agents, to do its share. Whose decision would actually prevail in making rehabilitation loans - the agency which handled the planning and guidance work, or the agency which paid the money and collected the loan? Would not disagreement actually result in nothing being done?

6. If duplication is the problem requiring attention, will it be solved by a board, or by scattering administration through a maze of committees, boards, and State officials . . . ?



## Part III

## WHAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS DONE TO ACHIEVE COORDINATION

Coordination must and does reach into all aspects of the Department's work. It begins with research; without it at this stage, research workers may fail to develop the facts most urgently needed; and administrators, unaware of research, may find themselves trying to carry out programs at cross purposes with research findings. Coordination requires, second, the development of a common plan. Third, each party to the plan must execute his part in it. How has the Department set about to achieve coordination?

Launching a number of new programs -- almost a score of them in a few years -- naturally led to some confusion and duplication of effort among agencies at first. The Department immediately went to work to eliminate these faults.

The first organized effort was in 1935 through a land policy committee. Agency heads met together regularly, ironed out major policy differences, coordinated their land-acquisition activities and recommended to the Secretary various procedures to promote coordination. Shortly thereafter a departmental coordinating committee was set up, and a three-man staff was assigned to help follow through on the committee's decisions. Then in July 1937 the Secretary, to aid him in directing programs toward common objectives, established the Office of Land Use Coordination which, through liaison representatives in all appropriate agencies, initiated systematic methods of coordination, including --

- (a) Coordination of all survey and related fact-finding work;
- (b) Coordination of general planning, at that time carried on separately by each agency;
- (c) Coordination of policies and procedures;
- (d) Organization changes designed to harmonize programs;
- (e) Constant study of all basic legislation, at the request of congressional committees, in order to offer suggestions that would help Congress develop a harmonious group of enabling legislation, rather than merely isolated acts aimed at single problems;
- (f) Interdepartmental coordination of all land-use programs and policies; and
- (g) Regional coordination in the southern and northern Great Plains.

Thus, then, the Department had systematic methods of coordinating its research, educational, information, personnel, fiscal, and land-use activities.

It was soon found, however, that something more was needed. Each agency was equipped to plan and execute, but the Department as a whole was not equipped to carry on unified general planning nationally, regionally, or locally.

The next major step was the working out of an agreement with the State land-grant colleges, known as the Mount Weather agreement, under which both parties agreed to cooperate in establishing general planning procedures in the counties and the States.

Finally, the Secretary of Agriculture, in October of 1938, initiated and Congress approved a general reorganization of the Department. This reorganization reduced the number of agencies with which operators of



privately owned lands must deal. It placed the physical land use adjustment programs -- erosion control, the farm part of flood control, the water facilities program, submarginal land purchase and development, and farm forestry -- in the charge of the Soil Conservation Service. It directed the Farm Security Administration to carry out the rural rehabilitation and tenancy programs. It made the major task of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration the management of the conservation and adjustment programs; the management of the ever-normal granary through commodity loans and marketing quotas, and the handling of parity payments when authorized. It consolidated all of the marketing activities of the Department previously scattered among seven bureaus, under a director of marketing and regulatory work.

This reorganization put the Department's house in order by consolidating under single administrators activities of common purpose and method, and by giving all action agencies a stake in cooperative planning.

Thus the Mount Weather agreement and the reorganization of the Department were designed to create the will on the part of farmers and administrators alike to formulate and execute a common plan.

#### COOPERATIVE LAND USE PLANNING

Two years of detailed study by the colleges and the Department were back of the mutual decision, made in July 1938, to map out a comprehensive system of land-use planning and agricultural program building. Everyone was convinced that if the right people could be brought together at the right times to consider the right questions in the formulation of agricultural plans and programs, this would, in itself, promote harmony in the administration of the farm program, and would reduce the number of problems that require efforts at administrative coordination.

The major ideas implicit in the land-use planning structure provided for in the Mount Weather agreement were at least four:

(1) Within the program mandates laid down by Congress it is essential that farmers themselves -- all farmers, regardless of party or organization affiliation -- shall have an opportunity to participate in adapting programs to local conditions. The specialist -- the "expert" -- must make his contribution, too, but expert knowledge and opinion are of little value unless the farmer is convinced he should take a given action.

(2) Planning must be kept close to actual daily administration of the farm program. Otherwise planning and administration would become insulated against one another.

(3) If each agency that administers an agricultural activity, the A.A.A., the Soil Conservation Service, the Farm Security Administration, the Forest Service, the State soil conservation committee, the State forester, and so forth, will participate with the research people, the people doing the educational work, and the farmers, in making plans and programs for a community, a county, a type-of-farming area, a State, this cooperative effort to build a program for the area will, in itself, necessarily produce a common definition of the problems to be solved, a common estimate of the resources available, a common formulation of priorities, a common understanding of objectives, a consensus on what is to be done, and when, and how. Agreement on these points seems to be the



best way to provide such a close meshing of the agricultural action programs as will make possible the desired coordination and unification in the farm program.

(4) The cooperative planning process seemed to everybody to bear within itself the seeds of a sound method of synthesizing the respective roles of the National, State, and local governments in agriculture. Each level of government would have plenty to do if it responded to the needs disclosed in the agreed-upon plans.

How did the cooperative land-use planning structure established in the Mount Weather agreement fulfill these ideas?

The Department and the land-grant colleges agreed that they would jointly set up in every agricultural county in the United States a county land-use planning committee. Within each county there would also be set up from 5 to 10 neighborhood or community land-use planning committees. Above the county level there would be established in each State a State land-use planning committee.

The community committees were to be made up almost wholly of farmers and were to be served by the county agent. The county committees were to have a clear majority of farmer members but were to include in their membership at least one representative from every major county, State and Federal agricultural agency carrying on activities within the county. The State committees were likewise to have farmer members and at least one representative of every State and Department of Agriculture agency administering agricultural programs in the State.

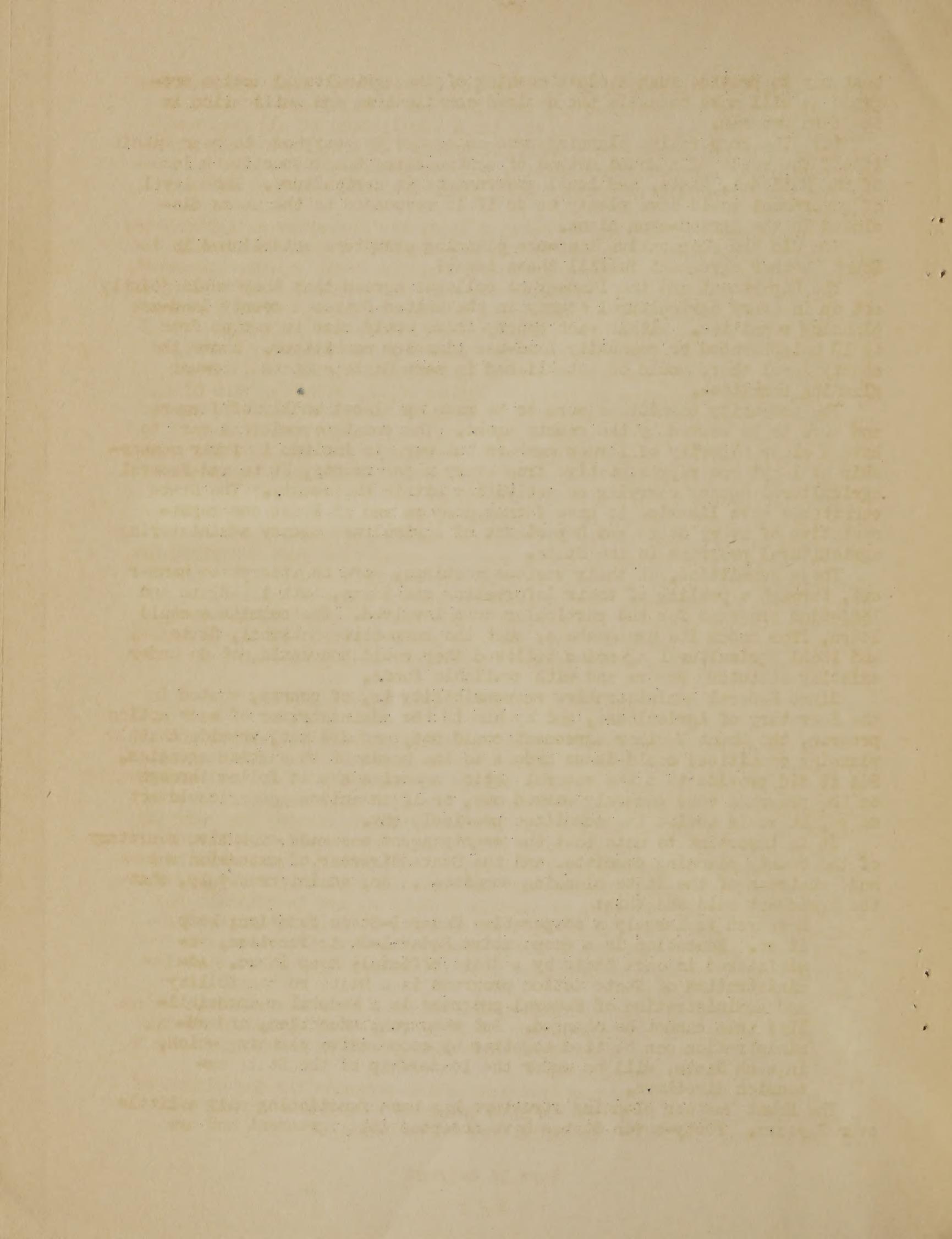
These committees, at their various meetings, were to attempt to hammer out, through a pooling of their information and ideas, both immediate and long-time programs for the particular area involved. The committee could learn, from among its own members, what the respective National, State and local agricultural agencies believed they could and could not do under existing statutory powers and with available funds.

Since Federal administrative responsibility is, of course, vested in the Secretary of Agriculture, and by him in the administrator of each action program, the Mount Weather agreement could not, and did not, provide that planning committees could issue orders to the heads of the action agencies. But it did provide that the several action agencies should follow through on the programs thus commonly worked out, or if an action agency could not do so, it would advise the committee precisely why.

It is important to note that the county agent was made executive secretary of the county planning committee and the State director of extension was made chairman of the State planning committee. So, administratively, what the agreement said was this:

Research is largely a cooperative Federal-State function; keep it so. Education is a cooperative Federal-State function, administered in each State by a State official; keep it so. Administration of State action programs is a State responsibility and administration of Federal programs is a Federal responsibility; this cannot be changed. But research, education, and administration can be tied together by cooperative planning which, in each State, will be under the leadership of the State extension directors.

The Mount Weather planning structure has been functioning only a little over 2 years. Forty-seven States have accepted this agreement and are



working with the Department to realize its objectives. Real progress has been made. This is indicated not only by a great multitude of small changes that have taken place in the local application of all programs, but also by major changes on a national basis. If the House subcommittee on agriculture appropriations wishes, the Department will be glad to submit for its inspection numerous county plans from all sections of the country.

As previously indicated, in October 1938, the Secretary of Agriculture effected a major reorganization of the Department. Two steps in this reorganization were taken directly because of the Mount Weather agreement. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics was made the central staff arm of the Secretary for agricultural planning and program building. It was charged with the task of providing professional services to the planning committees. The plans and programs of these various committees were, in addition, to reach the Secretary of Agriculture through the Bureau of Agricultural Economics so that the Bureau might, with the help of all appropriate agencies, examine and analyze those programs on their way to the Secretary. The second major step was the establishment of an Agricultural Program Board within the Department. The heads of the major agencies of the Department were made members of the Program Board whose function it became to sit with the Secretary and review regularly all programs and major actions of the agencies, to judge of their effectiveness, and to recommend to the Secretary measures for their improvement.

The cooperative planning procedures and committees just described are the property of no one agency. They do not belong exclusively to the State extension services, nor exclusively to the Department, nor exclusively to any other of the participating action agencies, nor even exclusively to the farmers. They are the joint property of all of these. In that very fact lies their strength and their real promise.

#### PLANNING LEADS TO ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

The practical, cooperative planning described here is leading not only to program changes but also to changes in organization and administration at the local, State, and Federal levels. For example: Many soil conservation districts have been organized by farmers because their own studies convinced them that they needed local administrative machinery for carrying on their share of the conservation job. State Governments are reconsidering their methods of administering State lands, of handling tax reversion, and of managing land-classification and zoning. The Department of Agriculture has reorganized extensively, as already indicated, and in addition has made many administrative changes, such as the recent designation of a field coordinator in the Wenatchee apple-growing district where farmers and official agencies are convinced that by cooperative effort real improvement can be made.

Thus programs and the administration of them are never static. Change is a part of dynamic administration as it is a part of dynamic society. But good changes can be based upon experience, just as bad changes can be avoided by studying experience.

After 8 years of managing national action programs the Department of Agriculture believes that it has made progress in doing a better, more efficient job. But there is still much to be done.

